



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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ABS says 3.7 million not in the labour force

Results from the survey **Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia** show that in September 1997 there were approximately 3.7 million persons aged 15 to 69 who were not in the labour force, that is, neither employed nor unemployed. Of these people 1,189,100 wanted to work but were either not actively looking for work (96 per cent) or not readily available to start work (4 per cent).

The number of discouraged jobseekers (118,400) remained almost unchanged from September 1996. These were people who wanted to work and were available to start work, but were not doing anything to find a job mainly because they believed that employers considered them too young or too old (41 per cent), or there were no jobs in their locality or line of work (22 per cent).

The majority of discouraged jobseekers were female (66 per cent). Of these, 40 per cent were aged 45 to 59 years. The majority of male discouraged jobseekers were aged 55 to 69 years (57 per cent).

There were a further 630,600 persons who wanted to work and were available to start work within four weeks, but were not actively looking for work for personal or family reasons. The most common main reasons reported by these people were 'childcare' (33 per cent), 'attending an educational institution' (27 per cent) and 'own ill health or physical disability' (16 per cent).

Two thirds of persons not in the labour force were women. Their most commonly reported activity was 'home duties/childcare' (61 per cent), followed by 'attending an educational institution' (15 per cent). Males reported their most common activity when not in the labour force as being 'retired/voluntarily inactive' (33 per cent), followed by 'attending an educational institution' (31 per cent).

Government pensions or cash benefits were the main source of income for 53 per cent of persons not in the labour force. Another 35 per cent of persons had no income or relied on someone else's income. Females accounted for 78 per cent of this group.

Copies of the publication **Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 1997** (cat. no. 6220.0) are available from ABS Bookshops.

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